

Remarks:

With the above-made amendments, claims 3-28, 30-38, 40-63, 65 and 67 remain pending of which claims 3-6, 13, 15, 30, 33-37, 40, 46, 65 and 67 are currently amended. Claims 1-2, 29, 39, 64 and 66 are now canceled. With these amendments, it is submitted, the application is now in condition for formal allowability.

At the outset, appreciation is expressed to the Examiner for the indication that claims 17-28 and 54-63 are allowable and, also, that the subject matter of original claims 3, 6-16, 30-38, 40-53, 65 and 67 are considered allowable and would be formally allowed upon being re-presented in an appropriate self-contained format. Accordingly, the subject matter of base claim 1 and intervening claim 2, both now canceled, were incorporated into that of claim 3, thereby re-presenting claim 3 as an independent claim in condition for allowability. The corresponding dependent claims thereof are now also allowable. In view of the canceling of claim 1, the dependency of claim 4 was changed so that it is now dependent on claim 3, thereby rendering claim 4 allowable. Likewise, the subject matter of original base claim 1 has also been separately incorporated into that of claims 5, 6, 13 and 15, respectively, thereby re-presenting those claims as allowable independent claims. Further, the subject matter of original independent claim 29 (now canceled) has also been separately incorporated into that of claims 30 and 33-37 thereby re-presenting those claims as allowable independent claims and, correspondingly, also rendering the dependent claims thereof, i.e., 31, 32

and 38 allowable. The subject matter of original independent claim 39 (now canceled) has been separately incorporated into claims 40 and 46 thereby re-presenting those claims as allowable independent claims. Correspondingly, the corresponding dependent claims 41-45 and 47-53 are now also rendered allowable. Further, the subject matter of original independent claim 64 (now canceled) has now been incorporated into that of claim 65 thereby re-presenting claim 65 as an allowable independent claim. Likewise, the subject matter of independent claim 66 (now canceled) has been incorporated into that of claim 67 thereby re-presenting claim 67 as an allowable independent claim. That is, applicants have decided, at the present time, to cancel the rejected claims and to re-present the otherwise allowable dependent claims in an appropriate claim format thereby placing all of the previously objected to claims in condition for formal allowability. Claim 4 is now also considered allowable since it is now dependent on an allowable independent claim.

It is submitted, agreeing to the canceling of the rejected claims 1, 2, 29, 39, 64 and 66 as well as effecting a claim dependency change with regard to original claim 4 should not be construed as an acquiescence with regard to the merits of the previously outstanding art rejections. Rather, the canceling of those claims/amendments to the currently pending claims are being effected noting that no other issues are outstanding, in consideration of applicants receiving an early formal notification of allowability.

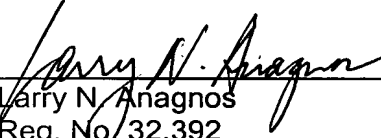
Therefore, having obviated all outstanding issues, in view of the amendments presented hereinabove, together with these accompanying

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remarks, acceptance and formal entry of this amendment as well as an early formal notification of allowability of the above-identified application is respectfully requested.

To the extent necessary, applicants petition for an extension of time under 37 CFR §1.136. Please charge any shortage in the fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, to the Deposit Account of Antonelli, Terry, Stout & Kraus, LLP, Dep. Acct. No. 01-2135 (0173.37566X00), and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,
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